

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                    1.        A method, in a messaging server, of connecting parties with mutual  
2 interests, comprising the steps of:  
3                    presenting a media object to a first user;  
4                    accepting a first comment from the first user;  
5                    presenting the media object to a second user along with the first comment;  
6                    accepting a reply comment from the second user; and  
7                    if the reply comment fits a matching criteria, connecting the first and the  
8 second user in a messaging session.

1                    2.        The method of claim 1, wherein the matching criteria is in the form  
2 of an approval indication by the first user of the reply comment.

1                    3.        The method of claim 1, wherein the media object includes one, or a  
2 combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.

1                    4.        The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
2                    presenting the media object and the first comment to a third user and  
3 subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;  
4                    presenting the first user with reply comments accepted from the third or  
5 subsequent users; and  
6                    if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are  
7 accepted by the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments  
8 to the messaging session.

1                    5.        The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined display count is  
2 a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user.

1                   6.       The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined display count is  
2 a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user, such that the  
3 predetermined display count is lower for more popular media objects relative to less  
4 popular media objects and lower for more popular first users relative to less popular first  
5 users.

1                   7.       The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined display count is  
2 a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1                   8.       The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of media objects are  
2 associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are  
3 associated with the nodes.

1                   9.       The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:  
2 accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment  
3 with one of the nodes; and  
4 presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of  
5 the nodes.

1                   10.      The method of claim 9, further comprising a step of limiting the  
2 subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent  
3 node.

1                   11.      The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of media objects are  
2 associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the  
3 concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1                   12.     A method, in a messaging server, of connecting parties with mutual  
2 interests, comprising the steps of:  
3                   presenting a media object to a plurality of users;  
4                   accepting a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;  
5                   presenting the media object and the first comment to the plurality of users;  
6                   accepting a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users;  
7                   presenting the reply comment to the first user; and  
8                   connecting the first and the second user in a messaging session if the first  
9 user indicates approval of the reply comment.

1                   13.     The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes one, or  
2 a combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.

1                   14.     The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:  
2                   presenting the media object and the first comment to a third user and  
3 subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;  
4                   presenting the first user with reply comments accepted from the third or  
5 subsequent users; and  
6                   if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are  
7 accepted by the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments  
8 to the messaging session.

1                   15.     The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display count  
2 is a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user.

1                   16.     The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display count  
2 is a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user, such that the  
3 predetermined display count is lower for more popular media objects relative to less

4 popular media objects and lower for more popular first users relative to less popular first  
5 users.

1 17. The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display count  
2 is a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1 18. The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects are  
2 associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are  
3 associated with the nodes.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the steps of:  
2 accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment  
3 with one of the nodes; and  
4 presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of  
5 the nodes.

1 20. The method of claim 19, further comprising a step of limiting the  
2 subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent  
3 node.

1 21. The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects are  
2 associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the  
3 concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1 22. The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes a link  
2 to the first comment.

1                   23.     The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of the second  
2 user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more  
3 comments including the first comment.

1                   24.     A method, in a messaging server, of connecting parties with mutual  
2 interests, comprising the steps of:  
3                   presenting a media object to a plurality of users;  
4                   accepting a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;  
5                   presenting the media object and a link to the first comment to the plurality  
6 of users;  
7                   accepting a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users in  
8 response to the first comment;  
9                   presenting the reply comment to the first user; and  
10                  connecting the first and the second user in a messaging session if the first  
11 user indicates approval of the reply comment.

1                   25.     The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of the second  
2 user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more  
3 comments including the first comment.

1                   26.     The method of claim 24, wherein the messaging session is an  
2 instant message session.

1                   27.     The method of claim 24, further including the step of providing the  
2 first comment to the second user in response to a search inquiry entered by the second  
3 user.

1                    28.     The method of claim 27, wherein the search inquiry is a keyword  
2     search.